

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.]

DEAR EDITOR: The majority of your correspondents in writing on the subject of trained nurses, versus untrained nurses, seem to agree that the graduate nurses are to blame for the present state of affairs. If such is the case, are not the training schools at fault? First, in accepting as pupils women who are not fitted for the work, and then in not requiring a sufficiently high standard of work before granting their diplomas, and in not giving enough time or attention to the training of pupils for private nursing.

The State registration of nurses, which will mean that all training schools must conform to a higher standard of training for their nurses than is now required in many schools, will in part, remedy this evil.

Nursing in private families is certainly very different from hospital work, but I do not agree with one of your correspondents who writes that "the only way to learn private duty is to do it." But I do think, however, that in even our best training schools, the teaching of private nursing is sadly neglected. Many of the superintendents and teachers have had little or no experience in private work and cannot realize the difficulties to be overcome, or the importance of the many little things which make or mar, the success of the nurse in a private house.

Would it not be possible to give each graduating class the benefit of a few talks on private nursing, given by some successful nurse in active practice? Surely each superintendent could find among her graduates nurses who would be capable, and I should think, glad to give such a talk.

The pupil nurse would in this way, get a better idea of what is expected of her in private duty and profit by others' experience, and so be spared some of the blunders many of us have made in our first years of private work.

It seems to me this would be a better way of meeting the difficulty, than returning to the old method of sending the pupil nurses out to cases which rightly belong to the graduates.

E. F. D.

[This writer makes a very practical suggestion. Alumnae Associations might suggest this to their schools.—En.]

DEAR EDITOR: I enjoy the JOURNAL very much and could not do without it. It has been some time since I have seen any news from Kansas City. But it is not because there are no nurses or that they are not busy.

The Kansas City Association of Graduate Nurses has a meeting once a month. One of the features of each meeting is a lecture by some prominent doctor. In this way the doctors become acquainted with the association and with the nurses personally as well as furnish an instructive variation for the nurses, most of whose lecture course stopped with their hospital training.

We have a register of forty-six names. So with four or five calls a day, which often happens, the nurses can be kept busy from this register alone.

We are working, loping and waiting for State registration. E. T.

DEAR EDITOR: Was it a "mind-wave" that caused protests and warnings to nurses against the lay nursing press to sound almost simultaneously in several quarters last month? At the Niagara meeting and the Toronto conference I made the very points made in the British Journal by an English Matron at almost the same moment—that all publications controlled by nurses are sound and solid on all questions of ethics and progress, whereas, the lay press is without exception hostile to the union and co-operation of nurses for their advancement, opposed to state registration, the enemy of independence and self-government, and the fomentor of discord and distrust. At nearly the same time Dr. Felix Meyer, in Australia, was advising the nurses of Victoria to control and write their own journal.

The lay nursing press of England is especially mischievous, and it is perfectly astounding that in an Anglo-Saxon country the nurses should encounter opposition of precisely the same character that the "Intellectuals" of Russia encounter in their strivings for freedom;—only different in degree—not in kind.

Intimidation, browbeating, secrecy and underhandedness in attack, anonymity, the copious use of money, the effort to break down freedom of expression. These are the tactics of the lay nursing press against which nurses who are working for organization, self-government, higher education, and legal status must defend themselves and stand.

And they will do it, too, for progress cannot be stayed.

L. L. Dock

[LETTERS to the editor must be accompanied by the name in full and address of the writer, otherwise such communications cannot be recognized. The name need not appear in the JOURNAL unless so desired.—Ed.]